

Message Text

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LONDON OSLO USNATO ANKARA ATHENS COPENHAGEN LISBON LUXEMBOURG
OTTAWA PARIS REYKJAVIK ROME 20 MAR 78 QUOTE

S E C R E T BONN 05006

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: NATO, MNUC, GW

SUBJECT: ERW CONSULTATIONS

REFERENCE: STATE 70801

1. AT OPENING OF BUSINESS ON MARCH 20, THE DCM CONVEYED THE DECISION AND EXPLANATION IN PARA ONE OF REFTEL TO FONODF POLITICAL DIRECTOR BLECH AND AT THE SAME TIME THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR INFORMED AMBASSADOR RUTH.
2. LATER IN THE MORNING, BLECH TOLD THE DCM THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE
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SINE DIE POSTPONEMENT OF ERW CONSULTATIONS IN THE NAC.
BLECH SAID GENSCHER WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE
RATIONALE FOR THE POSTPONEMENT. IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO
THE FRG WHY AN INTRA-ALLIANCE DECISION ON ERW WAS
CONNECTED TO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND THE BEGIN
VISIT. BLECH SAID HE COULD IMAGINE THAT THERE WERE
"OTHER MORE SPECIFIC REASONS."

3. BLECH SAID THE POSTPONEMENT WAS A BIT EMBARRASSING FOR THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT. THE FRG HAD WORKED HARD FOR AN AGREED POSITION, AND HAD BEEN OF THE VIEW THAT A CONSENSUS COULD HAVE BEEN OBTAINED IN THE NAC ON MARCH 22. BLECH SAID THE FRG HAD MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE GERMAN TANK OPTION WOULD NOT HAVE MEANT A SLOWING DOWN OF THE CONSENSUS. ALSO, BLECH POINTED OUT THAT THE FRG HAD LOBBIED WITH THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM ON BEHALF OF A CONSENSUS. HE SAID THE FRG HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE TWO COUNTRIES MIGHT HAVE REMAINED SILENT IN THE NAC, SINCE THE CONSENSUS ENVISIONED WOULD NOT HAVE PREJUDICED NATIONAL DEPLOYMENT DECISIONS. IN SHORT, BLECH FELT THAT WE HAD BEEN AT A VERY FAVORABLE MOMENT IN TIME FOR A CONSENSUS.

4. BLECH SAID HE WAS NOW CONCERNED THAT THE FRAGILE SCENARIO WE HAD BUILT UP COULD BE PLACED IN JEOPARDY - NOT, HE EMPHASIZED, FROM WITHIN THE FRG, BUT BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE PART OF OTHERS (E.G., THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM). ALSO, THERE COULD BE PRESS LEAKS WHICH COULD INTRODUCE NEW PRESSURES AND COMPLICATIONS.

5. BLECH EMPHASIZED THAT THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT WAS AS
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WILLING AS EVER TO PURSUE A CONSENSUS AS PREVIOUSLY ENVISIONED. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT TO MAXIMIZE THE CHANCE OF OBTAINING SUCH A CONSENSUS, THE SCENARIO WHICH WE HAD CONSTRUCTED SHOULD BE PUT BACK ON TRACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. BLECH SAID THE FRG WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING MORE ABOUT WHY WASHINGTON HAD DECIDED FOR THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE ERW DISCUSSION AS WELL AS WHEN THE USG WOULD ENVISION THE DISCUSSION TAKING PLACE.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GERMANS ARE DISAPPOINTED BY THE POSTPONEMENT, THEY STILL APPEAR VERY WILLING TO WORK HARD FOR A CONSENSUS AND THEY FEEL THE NAC SHOULD ADDRESS THE QUESTION QUICKLY BEFORE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONSENSUS IS LOST. FROM WHAT WE KNOW HERE, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE IN OUR BEST INTEREST TO PROVIDE THE GERMANS, ON AN URGENT BASIS, WITH AS MUCH RATIONALE AS POSSIBLE FOR THE POSTPONEMENT AND WITH AN INDICATION OF WHEN WE FEEL THE NAC DISCUSSION SHOULD BE HELD.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON GUIDANCE.

STOESSEL

UNQUOTE VANCE

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